Manitoba

Annual Report 1985 - 86

Manitoba Women's Directorate

Manitoba

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May, 1986

The Honourable Judy Wasylycia-Leis
Minister responsible for the
Status of Women
141 Legislative Building

Madame:

I have the honour of presenting herewith the Annual Report of the Manitoba Women's Directorate of the Province of Manitoba for the year 1985-1986.

Your obedient servant,

Doris Mae Oulton

Doris Mae Oulton
Executive Director

Manitoba

Minister responsible for the Status of Women

Room 302
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Winnipeg, Manitoba, CANADA
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May, 1986

Her Honour
Pearl McGonigal
Lieutenant-Governor
of the Province of Manitoba

May It Please Your Honour:

I have the honour of presenting herewith the Annual Report of the Manitoba Women's Directorate of the Province of Manitoba for the year 1985-1986.

Respectfully submitted,

Judy Wasylycia-Leis

Judy Wasylycia-Leis

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A. Mandate

In January 1984, the Women's Bureau was restructured in order to establish the Manitoba Women's Directorate. The mandate of the Women's Directorate is to coordinate the government's response on all status of women issues and to ensure that government programs, policy and legislation reflect women's concerns. The restructuring and the accompanying shift to policy analysis from employment counselling are consistent with the intent to assign high priority to women's concerns at the policy-making level, rather than only at the "remedial" level of corrective programs and services.

The Manitoba Women's Directorate, under the direction of the Minister responsible for the Status of Women, assists government departments, Crown Corporations, institutions, health facilities, the private sector and the community in a cooperative effort to reduce systemic discrimination, and increase equal opportunities for women. This is done through policy analysis and research, the development or coordination of special programs and projects, liaison and consultation with the women's community as well as special interest groups, and an ongoing promotion of women's concerns to appropriate bodies.

Specific Objectives Include:

1. development of mechanisms for departmental analysis of policies and programs,

2. initiation, development and coordination of policies that meet the special needs of women,

3. assistance to the Minister with communication, outreach, and policy advice,

4. coordination of federal/provincial/territorial activities, and,

5. development and delivery of internal and public informational materials.

The Women's Directorate is involved with issues such as wife abuse, small business, labour force strategy, education, economic security, sexual harassment, child care, family law, and economic development. It remains in touch with groups and individuals concerned about women in the northern, rural, farm and urban areas, Native women, visible minority women, immigrant women, and youth in order to ensure effective integration of their concerns into the policy process.

B. Overview

The Manitoba Women's Directorate has been involved in a number of activities throughout the 1985-86 reporting year.

The major focal point in 1985 was the organization, preparation and successful execution of the Fourth Annual Conference of the Ministers responsible for the Status of Women, co-hosted by the province of Manitoba and the Federal Government on June 5-7, 1985. Following this conference, the Honourable Muriel Smith attended the July, 1985 world conference marking the end of the United Nations Decade for Women in Nairobi, Kenya as a member of the official Canadian delegation. The Minister was joined in Nairobi by nineteen other Manitoba women who attended the unofficial gathering, Forum '85. The activities for continuing action from both the national and international gatherings included, among others, agenda items on women and equality at the Halifax First Ministers' Conference in November, ongoing work on the issues of child care and wife battering, special policy development for immigrant and visible minority women, and follow-up work on the United Nations' Forward Looking Strategies document, with a major document being prepared reflecting the work by the various government departments in achieving the goals outlined in that document.

Numerous consultations with Manitoba women also took place during this reporting period. A major tour of central and southern Manitoba was under taken by the Minister in November. Meetings were held with women and men in Brandon, Minnedosa, Dauphin, Roblin, Arborg and Selkirk. Consultations between various women's groups and the Minister were also held on the issue of pensions and on the discriminations encountered by immigrant and visible minority. The Directorate had official involvement with activities organized by Manitoba women including the founding meeting of the Manitoba Metis Women's Alliance, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women's mid-year conference, the Manitoba Women's Institute, The Catholic Women's League, the Manitoba Ad Hoc Committee on the United Nations End of the Decade for Women, the Charter of Rights Coalition, Northern Options for Women, and the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women, the Limestone Training and Employment Opportunities Conference and the Career Symposium.

C. Research and Policy Analysis

1. Federal/Provincial/Territorial Activities

a. Fourth Annual Conference of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women.

On June 5-7, Manitoba and the Federal Government co-hosted the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Conference of Ministers responsible for the Status of Women. Ministers and/or their senior officials met in Winnipeg to discuss a number of topics that concern women: the integration of women's issues into the economic policy-making process, wife battering, child care, and the United Nations Decade for Women Conference in Nairobi, held in July, 1985.

The Honourable Muriel Smith presented her colleagues with a proposal for a "Women's Equality Accord" containing principles based on the spirit of the U.N. convention to Eliminate all Forms of Discrimination Against Women.

These principles were officially endorsed by the Government of Manitoba and were reflective of a continuing effort to assist women in achieving economic equality with men. They were distributed by Premier Pawley at the Regina First Ministers' Conference on the Economy in February 1985, and were presented at the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Conference of Ministers responsible for the Status of women in June 1985 as a suggested framework for further discussions of women's economic concerns at the next First Ministers' Conference on the Economy.

The principles stated:

1. A co-ordinated national effort and commitment are required to achieve economic equality for women.

2. Economic equality for women is beneficial to Canada, as well as to women.

3. Women's issues are economic issues.

4. Economic decisions must take into consideration impact on women.

5. Gender disparity should be approached in the same manner as regional disparity.

6. Costs and benefits of economic development must be distributed fairly.

7. Government has a responsibility and a clear mandate from the conclusions of the federal government's Abella Report to intervene to ensure women's economic equality.

While the Conference did agree that women's issues are economic issues, the Equality Accord did not achieve consensus.

Child care and wife battering were also major topics on the Conference's agenda. The availability of quality child care has been widely recognized as an important factor in women's efforts to attain social and economic equality. At the Conference, Manitoba stressed the need for a national strategy on day care, referring to its proposal for a National Day Care Act which was submitted earlier to the federal goverment.

The federal government also briefed the Conference on the preparations of the official Canadian delegation to the United Nations Decade for Women Conference, held in Nairobi in July.

In October 1985, the Ministers met once again in Ottawa to finalize plans to integrate women's issues into the agenda for the upcoming First Ministers' Conference and to deal with the papers prepared by the working groups on child care and wife battering.

b. Halifax First Ministers' Conference

In preparation for the Annual Conference of First Ministers and the agenda item on women's equality, the Directorate prepared a provincial position paper entitled "Economic Equality for Women". The paper detailed women's position in a changing economy, the costs of women's inequality and the inter-relationship between social policy development and economic discrimination.

The agenda item incorporating women's issues was a first in the discussions of the First Ministers and represents an initial step in the elevation of the topic of women's economic inequality to a cooperative national and provincial program.

c. Other

The Women's Directorate responds routinely to a variety of federal reports and policy developments, providing a summary and analysis for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

In 1985-86, the Directorate analyzed the following federal reports and policies from a status of women perspective:

- Report of the commission on Equality in Employment (Abella Report)
- Bill C-62, Federal Employment Equity Act
- Report of the Special Committee on Pornography and Prostitution (Fraser Report)
- Criminal Code Section 195.1 (soliciting for the purposes of prostitution)
- Bill C-47 (Divorce and Corollary Relief Act)
- Bill C-48 (Family Orders Enforcement Assistance Act)
- Report of the Royal Commission on Economic Union and Development Prospects for Canada (Macdonald Report)

- Federal Budget 1986
- Ministerial Task Force on Program Review (Nielson Task Force Report)
- Report of the Task Force on Child Care (Cooke Report)

2. Inter-Governmental Activities

a. Labour Market Needs Committee

The Women's Directorate is a member of the Federal/Provincial Committee on Labour Market Needs. As such it develops a strategy for the consideration of training alternatives for women and monitors the ongoing activities of the committee to accurately reflect the needs and concerns of Manitoba women.

b. Workplace Innovation Centre

The Women's Directorate, through the Executive Director, sits on the board of the Workplace Innovation Centre. As such it ensures that the interests of women are considered as projects are approved for support in innovations within the workplace. With statistics reflecting that the primary target group affected by technological innovations will be women, this is a significant activity.

c. Interdepartmental Committee on Labour Force Strategy

The Women's Directorate has been involved in establishing an interdepartmental committee dealing with a labour force strategy for women in Manitoba, in preparation for a report to be presented at the federal-provincial level. Other participating departments are: Employment Services and Economic Security, Education, Labour, Executive Council, and Industry, Trade and Technology.

D. Provincial/Community Outreach

1. Resource Centres

In both the Winnipeg and Brandon offices, lending libraries

offered a wide selection of books, journals, videos, films and film equipment. The Directorate also responded to requests for displays at various conferences by coordinating pamphlets and newsletters which provided information on government programs and services available to Manitoba women. It has, on occasion, produced tapes to respond to specific request such as entrepreneurial women.

2. Brandon

The activities carried out by the Directorate's Brandon office included assistance with seminars and conferences, resource and referral information, and the analysis of policy from the perspective of rural women.

Among many specific events, the Directorate was instrumental in initiating a Rural Women's Conference in Brandon, organizing a two-part course (Women, Property and the Law) in order to inform farm women of their legal rights, participating in the Women's Institute Convention, planning and sponsoring a radio series on CKX on topics of concern to women, sponsoring delegates to the Second National Farm Women's Conference in Prince Edward Island, and liaison with the YWCA, the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Manitoba Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

3. Consultations

The Minister met with representatives of immigrant and visible minority women's groups in order to hear their concerns and to receive input for federal/provincial discussions.

The Minister also met with many representatives of women's organizations in order to hear their recommendations and suggestions regarding better pensions for women, specifically, homemakers.

Following the world conference and the non-governmental conference marking the end of the U.N. Decade for Women in Nairobi, the Directorate and the Minister responsible for the Status of Women held one follow-up meeting and liaised at

pre and post-Nairobi workshops organized by the Ad Hoc Committee on the U.N. End of Decade for Women. The Directorate has completed a provincial report assessing the progress made in Manitoba by government departments in relationship to the forward Looking Strategies document.

4. Communication

The primary tool used by the Directorate to provide women with information regarding government initiatives and policy development is the About Women newsletter published bimonthly.

5. Ministerial Tour of Central and Southern Manitoba

The tour of southern and central Manitoba November 5, 6, 7, and 8, 1985 was the first such tour ever undertaken by a Minister responsible for the Status of Women. The purpose of the tour was to provide women who live outside the provincial capital, and who do not have easy access to government representatives with an opportunity to raise their concerns and engage in a consultative process with government on status of women concerns.

Open forums were held in a total of eight cities and towns: Brandon, Minnedosa, Dauphin, Swan River, Roblin, Arborg, Gimli and Selkirk. In total over 225 women and men attended and voiced concerns over issues such as wife abuse, child care, pensions, farm economy, women's information centres and unemployment.

6. International Women's Day Reception

The fourth annual government reception marking the celebration of International Women's Day was held at the Legislative Building on March 7, 1986. Approximately 300 people attended. Refreshments, entertainment and child care were provided.

In Brandon, the Directorate co-sponsored with the Manitoba Action Committee on the Status of Women a panel discussion on "Women Working".